

## OCTOBER EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH



# ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH SERVICES

November 2021 Newsletter

### AUTAUGA CAMPUS

#### Autauga Medical Team



### VACCA CAMPUS

#### Ms. Gloria Leonard (Picture not available)



### MT. MEIGS CAMPUS

#### Not Available



### FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Greetings DYS Employees,

Not many people like change. Some are better at it than others. Next week we will change the clocks back an hour and it will be dark at 5pm. Most of us will take some time to adjust to this change in our daily schedule. We will also face some changes as we enter into 2022. Retirements of several career employees will eventually produce new faces in leadership and other key positions. Some employees may be curious or anxious about these changes. That's natural. However, the mission of this department and the path we are on will not change with new staff. Whether we promote existing staff or bring on new employees, the department's values, vision, and goals will remain constant.

As an organization we have been anticipating these changes and preparing to be in a better position to effectively manage these transitions. We did not however imagine a pandemic producing the type of organizational and employment challenges over the last year or so.

This month we will have our inaugural DYS Leadership Academy which is designed to help identify and develop current DYS staff for leadership opportunities in the future. We anticipate this academy will be a vital component to our succession planning efforts. Additionally, several years ago DYS developed the Senior Aide position as part of a career ladder and as a recruitment and retention strategy for our direct care workers. Most direct care staff would be eligible for a promotion after 3 years of service and this position gives the department the ability to recruit college graduates who may be interested in a juvenile justice career.

Success demands that we manage change both in our personal and professional lives. The only evidence of growth is change! It won't be easy and we will need to be patient with people and processes at times. But make no mistake, whether our team is made up of familiar or new faces it will be time for everyone to step up and pull together.

In this month of remembrance and thanksgiving, let us be grateful for the gifts and talents given to us, and thankful for all those in our lives that care and support us.

In appreciation,

Steven Lafreniere

# DYS Highlights

## DYS Executive Staff Host Appreciation Lunches for Campus Staff

At the end of September and during October, DYS Executive and Central Office Division staff went to the Mt. Meigs, Vacca, and Autauga Campuses to provide lunch to all of the campus staff. Thanks to a generous donation of some Executive Staff members, lunch for staff included fried chicken, macaroni and cheese, green beans, rolls, and cake. DYS greatly appreciates all of the hard work campus staff do each and every day.



★ *Thank you for all  
that you do!* ★



## The McNeel School Black Rhinos of Alabama: The Unwritten Chapter

The Black Rhinos of Alabama have initiated 2021-2022 services at McNeel School of DYS School District 210! The McNeel Black Rhinos: The Unwritten Chapter is a student centered mentoring/education program that focuses on disadvantaged youth from low to moderate income communities, and linking DYS students to resources that are not easily accessible. As educators with Alabama Youth Services School District 210, our extra-curricular activities have been designed to serve as resources to expose our youth to service, literacy activities, mentoring and college or career readiness. The aim is to help our students realize their dreams through mentoring and educational awareness. We presently serve 11 students and look forward to more! Quarter 1 activities, projects, events, and workshops will be held on campus and will include: Mentoring sessions, Black Rhinos sponsored Chess Tournament, Poetry Contests, and S.T.E.A.M competitions.



# DYS Highlights



## Mt. Meigs and Autauga Campuses Host Fall Festival Celebrations



Each year during the months of October and November, the DYS Campuses host their annual fall festival celebration for the students. Participation in the events is dependent on each student's ability to exhibit positive and prosocial behavior and refrain from negative behavior. At the Autauga Campus, students participated in outdoor recreational activities including kick ball, basketball, football, and volleyball. The students had hamburgers, hot dogs, baked beans, and an ice cream treat for lunch. In the evening, the students enjoyed movie night with snacks.

At the Mt. Meigs Campus, the students participated in a variety of activities including a cake walk, giant jenga, football challenge, corn hole, putt putt, three strikes game, giant connect 4, and matching game to name a few. Students earned participation points and were able to use them to purchase fall festival food items including nachos, hamburgers, hot dogs, cotton candy, and the famous Jo's Taki Tacos. The fall festival for ABSOPP students was held on Wednesday, October 27th and for the general population students on Thursday, October 28th.

### Autauga Campus Fall Festival



### Mt. Meigs Campus Fall Festival



**\* NOTE:** The Vacca Campus Fall Festival is scheduled for November 5th.

# DYS Highlights

## DYS Staff Participate in the Annual Juvenile Probation Officer Conference

On September 29th and 30th, DYS staff attended the annual Juvenile Probation Officer Conference hosted by the Alabama Administrative Office of Courts. Steve Lafreniere and Pat Pendergast provided updates on the Community and Institutional Services Divisions. Alesia Allen spoke on the topic "Why, not what; On Purpose." DYS staff also set up an informational booth for attendees to visit.



## Mt. Meigs staff provide displays in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month.



## Mt. Meigs Campus Hosts the Hope Inspired Ministries Graduation

On October 20th, the Mt. Meigs Campus and Hope Inspired Ministries (HIM) staff celebrated the eight graduates of the HIM Program. The ceremony included a welcome and opening prayer, introduction of graduates, the HIM pledge, special recognitions, presentation of diplomas, and closing remarks and prayer.



HOPE INSPIRED MINISTRIES FORMALLY  
INVITES YOU TO ATTEND THE:

## CLASS 2021-5 GRADUATION CEREMONY

WEDNESDAY | OCTOBER 20, 2021 | 11:00 A.M.  
MT MEIGS THEATRE

For your safety, we ask that you wear your mask and maintain appropriate social distance.



Thank you to all the staff who helped coordinate data collection for the month of October! Special thanks to Ms. Hinton and Ms. Linden for leading the effort and ensuring all data was entered on time! Outcome measures for October will be available at the end of November.